(b) if so, whether it would be financially more prudent if public-private partnership is massively resorted to in financing the infrastructure projects and there is no dilution in the "Reserves"; and

(c) what are the projections in the Eleventh Five Year Plan for public-private partnership for core sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, it is proposed to use a small portion of the country's forex reserves for financing infrastructure projects as availability of long term finance is a constraint. The initiative to utilize a small portion of forex reserves through an overseas SPV of IIFCL aims to partially address this issue. Long term finance can also be availed by PPP projects from the IIFCL ocerseas SPVs. As the amount being utilized for infrastructure financing is a very small percentage of forex reserves, there is no fear of dilution in the reserves.

(c) No separate projections of public private partnership for core sector has been made for Eleventh Five Year Plan. The estimates for private sector investment including public private partnerships for the Eleventh Five Year Plan are Rs. 601,959 crore.

Non-payment of import/customs duties

30. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of foreign flagged motor yachts and sailing boats are being owned and/or operated in Indian seas including in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands which do not need to pay import/customs duty whilst Indian flagged vessels pay customs duty of 30 plus per cent; and

(b) if so, whether this constitute a loophole that is being exploited to avoid customs duty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) A foreign flagged vessel whether or not owned and/or operated by an Indian, when calling on any Indian port is treated as conveyance and is not liable for payment of import duty. A motor yacht or sailing boat arriving into India for the first time, for registration as Indian flagged vessel, is considered as imported goods and is charged to applicable customs duty. On subsequent calls at any Indian Port, the Indian flagged vessel is treated at par with the foreign flagged vessel and is not charged to customs duty.

Suicide by debt-ridden farmers

31. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of farmers committed suicide because of their inability to pay back their loans from Commercial Banks during the last three years, till date;

(b) if so, the number and the details of such suicides;

(c) whether Government would like to take new initiative to help the farmers in distress;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) Various agencies such as Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), YASHADA, Pune and SAKAL Group of Newspapers, Pune, which conducted in-depth studies to ascertain the factors leading to the suicide of farmers attributed, among others, the following major reasons for the suicides committed by farmers in the country:

- Borrowings from non-institutional sources;
- Crop failure;
- Non-remunerative price for the produce;
- Health related expenses;
- Failure of irrigation structures; and
- Poor extension services.

While indebtedness of the deceased farmers in Andhra Pradesh was mainly from informal sources, in Maharashtra, both formal and informal sources constituted similar proportions. Lack of opportunities for supplementary livelihood in non-farm sector, absence of safety nets to cushion economic shocks and expenditure on marriage and illness leading to increased and accumulated debt burden were some of the other important factors indentified for farmers suicides.

(b) As per data available with NABARD, the reported number of farmers suicides during the years 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (till December, 2007) are 1832, 584, 274 and 291 respectively.

(c) to (e) Keeping in view the extreme conditions of the farmers in the 31 districts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala,a comprehensive Debt Relief Package for farmers premised on the package announced on 18.06.2004 but also specifically addressing the deep debt and distress of the farmers in the affected districts has been implemented. The main items of the package are as under:

(i) The entire interest on overdue loans as on 01.07.2006 will be waived in the affected districts such that all farmers will have no past interest burden as on that date. This should immediately make them eligible for fresh loan from the banking system.

(ii) The overdue loans of the farmers as on 01.07.2006 will be rescheduled over a period of 3-5 years with one year of moratorium.

(iii) An Additional credit flow will be ensured in these 31 districts in 2006-07.

As of now, interest worth Rs.824.98 crore, Rs. 1978.11 crore, Rs. 706.35 crore and Rs. 218.93 crore have been waived in the States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala respectively, of which 50% would be shared by Government of India and rest by the respective State Government.

Inflow of money

32. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that money flow from Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FDI Salaried class to other sectors would have any impact on the country's economy; and